No denying Greenwood
Bulldogs snap two-game slide in Class 6A title games. – Sports, 1C

Deals drive up auto sales
U.S. purchases of cars, trucks rose 1% last month, topping forecasts. – Business, 1D

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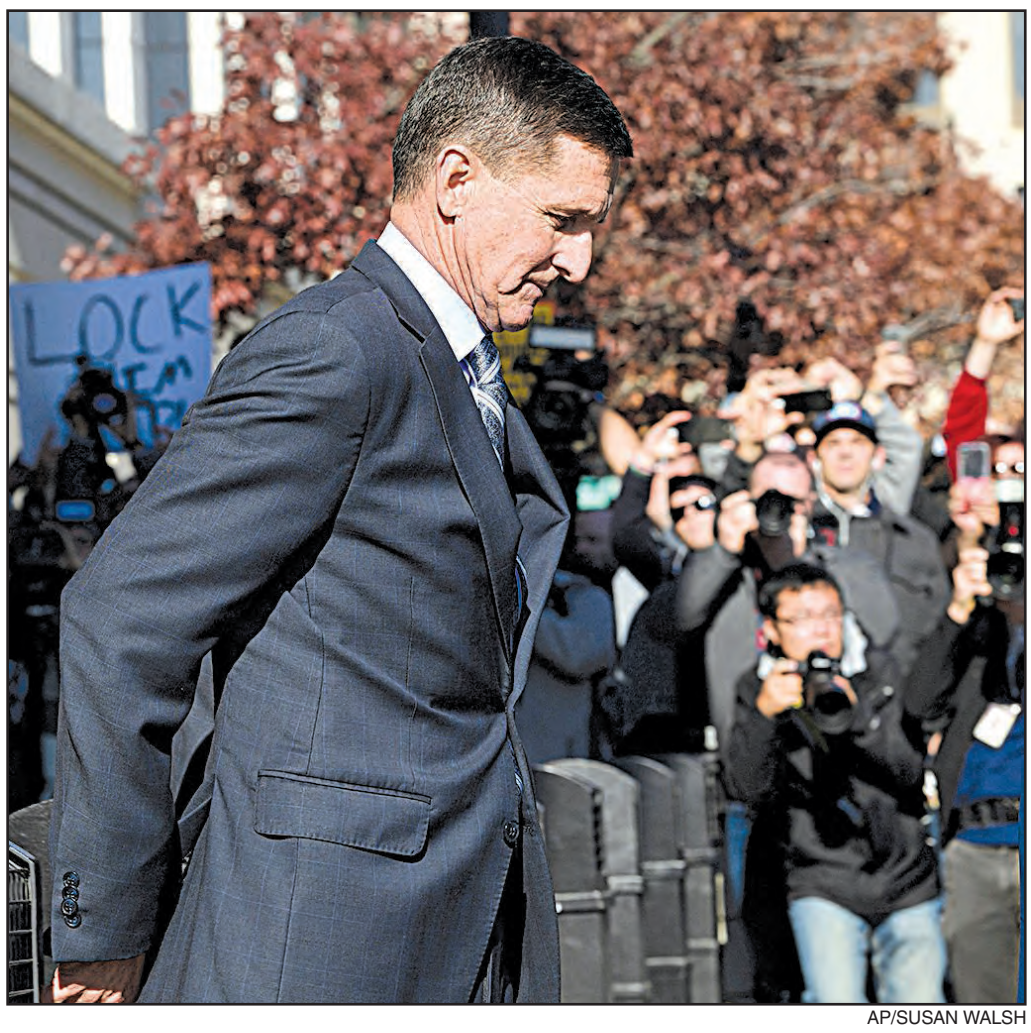
Flynn admits lies on Russia contacts



AP/SUSAN WALSH

Michael Flynn leaves federal court Friday in Washington after his guilty plea. Prosecutors said they would delay Flynn's sentencing, a sign that the investigation was not over.

Filings: 'Very senior' Trump aide had role

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, pleaded guilty Friday to lying to the FBI about conversations with the Russian ambassador last December.

Flynn's plea made him the first senior White House official to cut a cooperation deal in the special counsel's investigation into election interference.

Flynn's discussions with Sergey Kislyak, the Russian ambassador, were part of a coordinated effort by Trump's aides to create foreign policy before they were in power, documents released as part of Flynn's plea agreement show. Their efforts undermined the existing policy of President Barack Obama and flouted warnings by Obama administration officials that Flynn had discussed sanctions with Kislyak and was therefore compromised and potentially vulnerable to blackmail.

Kushner

Kislyak

KEY EVENTS leading to Flynn's guilty plea. Page 7A.

The documents do not disclose what Trump knew about Flynn's discussions. But in at least one instance, prosecutors say, Flynn was directed by a "very senior member" of the presidential transition team to discuss a U.N. resolution. Trump's lawyers believe that unnamed aide was Trump's son-in-law and close adviser, Jared Kushner, according to a lawyer briefed on the matter.

The transition team was led by Vice President Mike Pence. Its top members included Kushner; Reince

See **FLYNN**, Page 7A

GOP rounds up tax-plan votes

500-page bill's amendments keep senators working into night

The New York Times/T.J. KIRKPATRICK

Sen. Bob Corker said Friday that he would vote against the tax plan because of deficit concerns, but enough votes were lined up to pass it.

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — The Senate headed towards passage Friday of the most sweeping tax rewrite in generations, with Republicans lining up to approve an overhaul that will touch almost every corner of the U.S. economy.

Senators continued to work late into the night, voting on amendments to the bill.

HOUSE CONSERVATIVES struggle with leadership's strategy to avert shutdown. Page 3A.

Senate GOP leaders earlier Friday secured the final few votes they needed, from Sens. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., Ron Johnson, R-Wis., and Susan Collins, R-Maine. A single GOP holdout remained: Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., who had failed in his fight to add a deficit-containment mechanism to the legislation.

"We have the votes," Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told reporters after emerging from a meeting with his caucus.

By Friday night, Senate leaders were still rewriting parts of the bill and lawmakers received a nearly 500-page bill containing significant changes just hours before a planned vote.

The last-minute revisions prompted an outcry from Democrats, who said it was impossible for lawmakers to read, digest and vote on a significant piece of legislation in such a short period of time. Several took to social media to attack their Republican colleagues.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., called it "Washington D.C. at its worst" in a video in which he held up a page of the bill with handwritten changes

See **TAXES**, Page 3A

Graft trial delayed after tapes turn up

Judge plans hearing on new evidence

DOUG THOMPSON
NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

FAYETTEVILLE — Discovery of a cache of 79 more secret audio recordings made by former state Rep. Micah Neal has caused a delay in the corruption case involving former state Sen. Jon Woods.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Brooks will set a new trial date after a hearing to consider the impact of the new evidence, he said in a court order Friday. Neither the hearing nor the new trial date was set by the end of the day Friday, court records show.

Also indicted in the Woods case are Oren Paris III, president of Ecclesia College in Springdale; and consultant Randell Shelton Jr. The three are accused of arranging kickbacks to Woods and Neal, both Republicans from Springdale, in return

See **DELAY**, Page 2A

Albanian deluge

AP/HEKTOR PUSTINA

A woman and her son leave their flooded home in the Albanian village of Hasan just north of Tirana, the capital, on Friday. At least one death was reported after heavy rain fell over much of the country, closing roads, airports and schools.

3 entities greenlight tweaks in I-30 plan

Project seen near end of its hurdles

NOEL OMAN
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The three local jurisdictions involved in the $631.7 million Interstate 30 project through downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock have signed off on an amendment to the region's transportation improvement plan that will satisfy the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Little Rock, North Little Rock and Pulaski County authorized Metroplan, the long-range transportation planning agency for central Arkansas, to proceed with the amendment to update the work description of what is known as the 30 Crossing project, Tab Townsell, the agency's executive director, said Friday.

The move allows Metroplan to put out the amendment for public comment for a 15-day period beginning Sunday. The Metroplan board of directors would have to approve the amendment at its next meeting Dec. 20 after which, assuming it's approved, the organization will have no official say in how the project is shaped.

"This is setting up the last action," Townsell said. "This is the beginning of

See **I-30**, Page 8A

Trump denies Tillerson on borrowed time

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Friday denied that he wants to oust Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, calling reports to that effect "fake news," while his top diplomat brushed off speculation that he has lost the confidence of the White House.

As Tillerson went about his normal schedule of diplomatic activities, including two meetings with Trump, the president said his secretary of state is "not leaving."

"The media has been speculating that I fired Rex Tillerson or that he would be leaving soon — FAKE NEWS!" Trump tweeted. "He's not leaving and while we disagree on certain subjects, (I call the final shots)

See **TILLERSON**, Page 2A

AP/CAROLYN KASTER

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson leaves a meeting Friday with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj at the State Department, where he called speculation that he was being fired "laughable."

In the news

■ **The Very Rev. Kelvin Holdsworth**, an Anglican cleric and gay-rights campaigner, is urging people to pray that Prince George — age 4, and third in line to the British throne — will advance the cause of same-sex marriage by finding the love "of a fine young gentleman" when he grows up.

■ **Ted Turner**, the media mogul, wants to sell St. Phillips Island, a 4,700-acre barrier island near Beaufort, S.C., that he's owned since 1979, to the state for $5 million, millions of dollars less than the asking price of $24 million, to help a popular but eroding state park.

■ **Delonda Walker**, manager of a McDonald's restaurant in Tampa, Fla., will get a $110,000 reward for tipping off police about an employee who was later arrested on charges that he killed four people and terrorized a Florida neighborhood, police said.

■ **Ted Talbot**, a Maine Department of Transportation spokesman, said investigators have had no luck identifying a hit-and-run driver who caused $3 million in damage, including a large dent and crack, by striking a highway overpass in Augusta in October.

■ **Marlon Brannan**, a middle school principal in Enterprise, Miss., said a doe deer darted into the school and raced past arriving students, bloodying its nose when it tried to jump out a window before rushing outside through an open door.

■ **Tom Ross**, assistant police chief in Cohoes, N.Y., said amateur knife-maker John Gomes, 51, trying to imitate a technique he saw on television, sparked a fire that destroyed three downtown buildings and damaged 18 others, resulting in his arrest on arson and other charges.

■ **Bill Messerich**, police chief of South St. Paul, Minn., said he was "quite shocked" to get $1,000 and a letter asking forgiveness from an anonymous driver who admitted speeding off after hitting a parked car more than 30 years ago.

■ **Eric Wallace**, a Redding, Calif., police captain, said people looking for a Christmas tree found a partially clothed 25-year-old woman who said she had been beaten and abandoned a day earlier by two acquaintances who accused her of stealing drugs.

■ **Connie Lipton** of St. Paul, Minn., said that despite being grounded for repeatedly sneaking into the Macalester College library, her orange-and-white tabby named Max is now a social media sensation after library workers put up a wanted-type poster asking patrons, "Please do not let in the cat."

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK
Today Partly cloudy and mild.
High 65, winds calm.
Tonight Mostly cloudy and cool.
Low 46.

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